

Social Planning Cowichan

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News for September 2009



Message from Valerie Nicol, Board Chair

It has been a bee hive of activity for Social Planning Cowichan (SPC) these past few months. With the help of our researchers, we are making terrific progress with some of our major projects. This includes the Status of the Community Report (two) and the Affordable Housing initiative.

I am very pleased to announce that Social Planning Cowichan has received a \$14,600 grant from Heritage Canada Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage Program (BCAH) to host the second annual Walk of the Nations Festival. Last year's event, following the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG), was so successful that we are planning to do it again on October 3rd and 4th. SPC recently created the Cowichan Cultural Connections Council with the aim of building and encouraging cultural relationships in the Cowichan Region. More details about the festival are included in this newsletter.

While researching information for the Status of the Community Report (two), Linden Collette discovered that several agencies and organizations are all working on profiles of the Cowichan Region. What a great opportunity to collaborate and reduce duplication! With this in mind, Linden has organized a round table discussion meeting for anyone out there who is doing community-based research. You'll find more information in the newsletter.

Finally, on behalf of the board I would like to bid a fond farewell to board member Anne Murray. Anne, who was our North Cowichan Council representative, is leaving us to spend more time with her family. She has given a great deal of her time and energy to Social Planning. We will miss her expertise and considerable board and committee experience. All the best Anne, we will be thinking of you.

At the same time, I would like to welcome Garrett Elliot as our North Cowichan Council representative. Garrett is a member of Cowichan Tribes and comes to us with expertise in youth and family services. He has also worked with Lalum'utul' Smun'eem (Child and Family Services) and has developed training programs for foster parents. Welcome aboard Garrett!

Sincerely,
Valerie Nicol
SPC Board Chair

Message About Homelessness From Hiiye'yu Lelum (House of Friendship)

The year end report states that 1800 homeless individuals found support, food and personal care at the Homeless Program operating out of Hiiye'yu Lelum. This year, 400 new homeless regulars frequent the centre for programs and services.

The love and support that the homeless people receive is wonderful. They know that the people working in this field listen and care about them. This is shown through personal assistance with day to day life and access to basic services in order to survive.

The outreach workers say there are two steady volunteers for the homeless program. As many as seven attend depending on what is happening in a person's life.

Joe Sam, the Homeless Program's outreach worker says it is still difficult to access rental units. The frustration level is high for all involved.

At our breakfast program we feed between 25 to 40 people a morning. Between 15 to 20 people come to our coffee and muffin mornings. The personal care program which includes a washer and dryer and a shower is busy as well. Approximately eight people a day use the showers. This program is open from 6 a.m. to 8:45 a.m., which only allows so much time for the homeless people to wash and dry their belongings.



We still need tooth brushes, shampoo, socks and underwear for both male and females. If you have reading glasses that someone could use please pass them along. Staff say that the Cowichan Valley has been generous with donations of clothing and shoes for homeless people.

We are always open to donations. Just give us a call at 250-748-2242, but please make sure someone is there to receive your donation.

Janice Cameron
Hiiye'Lelum

Social Planning Cowichan Meets With Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA)

Last summer, members of SPC met with the Vice-President of Planning for the Vancouver Island Health Authority. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the seniors residential health care situation in the Cowichan Region as reported in an SPC report called Implications of Regional Growth in Cowichan: Part One (2008).

The objective of the meeting was to request a more collaborative and community based approach to research and planning of seniors residential health care needs. There is concern because VIHA has fallen short of their goal to provide residential care beds to seniors in Cowichan by 93 to 128 beds.

In an effort to work with the health authority to better understand the need in the Cowichan Region for seniors care, SPC requested that VIHA track and make public waitlists showing the number of seniors awaiting assessment for residential care, the number of seniors waiting for this care and the number of seniors relocated to other areas due to a lack of spaces in Cowichan. We were told that someone from Home and Community Care would be in touch with us to discuss the issue. Although our meeting took place a couple of months ago, we haven't heard back.

At the meeting we were told that VIHA was considering community processes but there would likely be no more funding for additional residential care beds for the Cowichan Region.

“Community groups, including Social Planning Cowichan are eagerly awaiting the community consultation process which we hope will be a collaborative and community based approach,” said **Candace Spilsbury**, Past Chair, Social Planning Cowichan.

Social Planning Cowichan Board Members

Valerie Nicol
Chair

Mark Buchanan
Vice Chair

Veronica Scott
Secretary

Debbie Williams
Treasurer

Pam Alcorn

Mike Coleman

Garrett Elliot

Gerry Giles

Ian Kalina

Gifty Serbeh-Dunn

Candace Spilsbury

Joanna Winter

New Staff Join Status of the Community Project



Allison Conway and **Miranda Rogers** recently joined the Status of the Community Project Two as Research Assistants. The study is the second of its kind to explore the overall health of the Cowichan Valley and the people who live here. The study includes 10 broad categories with 65 indicators of social health for the region. The first status of the community report can be found on SPC's website at www.socialplanningcowichan.org

Alison started with the project in May while Miranda joined in July. "Both bring talent and perseverance to the sometimes grinding task of finding and graphing statistical data," said **Linden Collette**, the project's supervisor. "Miranda has been working closely with staff at the Ministry of the Environment to get meaningful air quality data, an important indicator of health." Alison, meanwhile, brings graphics expertise to the project.

Alison and Miranda are also assisting with the Affordable Housing Project and the Implications of Regional Growth Study.

Cowichan Child Care Council Seeks New Board Members – This Could Mean You!

While much has been achieved to raise awareness of the need for quality child care and training opportunities for child care workers in the Cowichan Region, the need continues. The Cowichan Child Care Council is looking for people who are committed to improving the child care crisis in our Region. If you have an interest in child care and have a few hours a month to spare, please contact **Ian Kalina** at 250-746-1004 ext. 250. We would love to have you aboard!

Changes to SPC Constitution

At a recent board meeting, a change was made to the constitution that creates a position for past chairs to be on the board's executive. As a result, **Candace Spilsbury** is officially a member of the Social Planning Cowichan board executive. Candace is a founding member of Social Planning Cowichan and we are delighted that she has decided to remain with us in this capacity.



Take a Walk in Honour of Better Understanding

Walk of the Nations 2009 is an opportunity for everyone in the Cowichan Valley to walk together and, at the same time, learn about

each other's cultures and traditions. Organizers call it a 'celebration of acceptance, understanding and reconciliation of all peoples.'

Cultural celebrations kick off in Downtown Duncan on **Saturday, October 3** at 3:00 pm, and feature unique performers and artists until 8:00 pm. Then the walk starts 1:30 pm on **Sunday, October 4** at Centennial Park in Duncan, ending at the Qwut'sun Cultural and Conference Centre with performances for the entire afternoon. Heritage Canada will provide a \$14,000 grant in aid of the walk.



Patrimoine
canadien Canadian
Heritage

For more information please contact **Michelle Nowzek** or **Dianne Wilbee** at (250) 746-1004 or **Jenn George** at (250) 701-8381, or log on to www.walkofthenations.ca.

Status of the Community Researchers Busy Busy Busy!

Researchers **Miranda** and **Allison** have been on the go collecting research for several chapters in the report. With supervisor Linden Collette's guidance they have been sleuthing by telephone and email to collect data from a variety of government and non-profit organizations. The information they collect will provide a clear picture of the Cowichan Region based on the determinants of health.

About Social Planning Cowichan

Social Planning Cowichan (SPC) is a registered society founded in May 2004 to provide leadership that brings the community together to create a sustainable quality of life for everyone in the Cowichan Region.

Our Mandate is:

- To conduct research about the social health of the Cowichan Region
- To educate and inform the Cowichan Region community about social planning issues
- To facilitate partnerships and community consensus on issues and action plans
- To recommend action plans and short and long term strategies to improve the quality of life in the Cowichan Region



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